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Anton Reicha
Symphonies Vol. 1
Münchner Rundfunkorchester
Valentin Egel

In 1785, Antonín Reicha went to Bonn with his uncle Joseph to play flute in the court orchestra there. There he met Ludwig van Beethoven, ten months his junior. Soon they started a friendship that survived despite the long distance. Whilst Beethoven established himself in Vienna, Reicha achieved the highest acclaim in Paris as a composer and above all as a teacher. César Franck, Hector Berlioz, Louise Farrenc and Friedrich von Flotow are only a few of his illustrious pupils who learned their trade with the help of Reicha's astute technical prowess. It is not easy to sum up what he achieved. He wrote dozens of wind quintets, string quartets, other works of chamber music, highly original piano works as well as four symphonies and several overtures. His experimentation most likely evoked "Homeric laughter" from his famous Viennese friend. And how could it be otherwise, when pieces such as the overture – which can be heard on the first CD of our complete symphonic recording – throw even modern sensibilities off balance with their constant disruptions of metre without one being able to say why one keeps losing count... Only repeated listening helps!